

**Conference on Effectively Restoring Ecosystems  
22-24 August 2000, St. Louis, Missouri**

**BACKGROUND**

**Session:** Breakout Session 4B

**Topic:** Case Studies – Ecosystem Restoration Opportunities Associated with Other Initiatives

**Moderator:** Marty Hathorn, CESWF

**Recorder:** Curtis Hoagland, CESWF

**Panelists:**

- Larry Oliver, CENAE
- Leo Foley, CEMVR
- Hank Jarboe, CESWF

**Objective:** To identify opportunities for Corps ecosystem restoration projects associated with other National environmental initiatives, present characteristics of successful efforts, and provide lessons learned.

**Description:** The session consisted of case study presentations followed by questions and open discussion.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Marty Hathorn led off by stating that even though the Corps is still a construction agency, our mission has been shaped by Water Resource Development Acts passed by Congress since 1986 to have a multi-objective non-structural approach. He also stated that our direction hasn't just come from legislation and initiatives directed at the Corps, but also from a number of broad-based Federal initiatives and partnering opportunities that have affected the way we do business.

**Galilee Salt Marsh Restoration Project  
Associated with the Coastal America Initiative  
Larry Oliver, CENAE**

The Galilee Salt Marsh Restoration Project demonstrates the use of existing Corps of Engineers in combination with other Federal, state and local authorities to meet local, regional and national restoration objectives. The project is located in Narragansett, RI. It involved restoration of a tidally restricted salt marsh by installing culverts equipped with self-regulating tide gates, reconstructing a historic channel, and grading an area affected by dredged material disposal to elevations that would support salt marsh. Most of the work was accomplished under the Corps' Section 1135 program. Other programs, funding sources and initiatives included the Coastal America initiative, the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the state's Coastal Resources Management Program - Special Area Management Plan, and the Corps Wetlands Research Program. Many agencies and organizations provided funding and in-kind resources, these included the RI Department of Transportation, Ducks Unlimited, EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the RI Division of Fish and Wildlife. The

Division of Fish and Wildlife, the local sponsor, funded the University of Rhode Island to conduct baseline and post construction monitoring. Results from the first two years of monitoring indicate that the project was very successful with substantial reductions in the height, density, and biomass of Phragmites and increases in the height of salt marsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*).

**Coralville, Iowa**  
**Associated with a Brownfields Initiative**  
**Leo Foley, CEMVR**

Coralville is a small town in Iowa with a 200 Ac Brownfield area that they have received an EPA pilot city grant. The Corps is working with the city to utilize its Section 22 (Planning Asst to States), and Section 206 (Aquatic Restoration) authorities to help with comprehensive land use planning and restoration of the Iowa River. The goals of the project are to restore and enhance wetland and riparian habitat within the Iowa River and Clear Creek corridors to improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and restore aesthetic value. A preliminary restoration plan has been completed that includes: Riparian Restoration/Shoreline Protection of approximately 1 mile of shoreline, Wetland Creation and Buffer Planting. The work is in or around the Brownfield area.

**Laredo River Bend 206**  
**Associated with the American Heritage Rivers Initiative**  
**Hank Jarboe, CESWF**

The American Heritage Rivers Program (Executive Order 13061) is a presidential initiative to restore the natural resources and heritage to designated rivers. The program serves as a vehicle not only to restore the natural system but to leverage Federal resources to American Heritage Rivers (AHR). Fourteen rivers throughout the United States have been designated as AHR. The Rio Grande is an AHR, which flows from Colorado, south and east through New Mexico and Texas. The Fort Worth District has identified a Section 206 Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration project in old sand and gravel mining operation in southwest Laredo in a 130-acre area along the Rio Grande called the River Bend. The proposed project is to create a floodplain wetland complex through the management of exotic plant species, excavation and development of wetlands, grading to natural topography, revegetating with native trees, shrubs, grasses, and aquatic plants, streambank stabilization, and connecting the restored system to the Rio Grande through high flow swales.

**Lessons Learned:** Successful implementation requires patience, flexibility, and high degree of coordination not only with the sponsor and other resource agencies but with all the stakeholders. The Corps ecosystem restoration programs are consistent with the spirit and intent Major Federal initiative such as Challenge 21, Clean Water Action Plan, Coastal America, American Heritage Rivers, Livable Communities, and others

Questions and discussion following the brought about the following:

- That some of the Corps programs (Brownsfields) can play a large part in revitalizing some of the communities;
- We should base our decision making on non-monetary benefits (except recreation), however, these should bring about substantial incidental economic benefits.